

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

School Committee Meeting

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

Open Session

January 18, 2007

Special Joint Meeting of the School Committee and City Council The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM by Mayor Ramos. Mrs. Morris, School Committee Chair called the School Committee meeting to order. All members of the School Committee were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, David Medeiros, Mildred Morris and Steven Santos. Also present: Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of School and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was observed.

City Solicitor, William Conley stated that the purpose of the meeting between the City Council and School Committee is to discuss an Arbitration Award regarding the buyback benefit for health insurance, and both the City Council and the School Committee need to vote to move to Executive Session with the proper citation as required by the

open meeting laws.

After discussion regarding public input, requested by Council member Cusack, the Council deferred their motion to move to executive session. At the request of Mrs. Morris, Chair of the School Committee, a motion was made by Mr. Faria to hear public comment, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mrs. Santos, aye.

Mr. Joseph F. Martin, Jr. of 22 Charlotte Street, East Providence stated that he is opposed to school employees receiving medical benefits without paying anything for them and he felt that the term co-pay is misunderstood. He talked about administrative salaries on the backs of retirees and working people. He related that the cost of education in RI is too high for second rate teaching. He promised to continue to fight for the taxpayers' union and he demanded that this issue go to the Supreme Court.

Mr. John Fahey, 2535 Pawtucket Avenue, East Providence made reference to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the City Council and the School Committee. He stated that this issue should be fought all the way through the courts as the language is very clear and states "premiums." There should be no confusion as to what this means when talking about health insurance. He would like them to honor this declared policy and affirm with a public vote and then go into executive session to discuss litigation. He asked that the

School Committee and City Council pronounce the City's policy and take this into consideration, as this was the policy and they should be consistent with supporting this policy, then discuss matters of strategy.

Mr. Thomas C. Riley, 3620 Pawtucket Avenue, East Providence, asked the City Council to please remember they were elected to office to represent citizens and it is obscene to let these buybacks go on; he does not think the practice should continue where people are being paid not to take a free benefit plan, when he can't even afford to pay his health insurance. He finds it an insult that people do not take a first class plan available to them. He asked them to represent him; Mr. Larisa offered to litigate this issue with no cost to the city and they should put their foot down and act as representatives of the people.

Mr. Charles Mello, Jr., 596 Willett Avenue, East Providence, asked each member of the Council and School Committee if there is a memorandum of agreement in place between the City Council and the School Committee and asked for everyone to go on record regarding this. Dr. Ramos promised to make his decision based on his own information and not based on any action of a former Council; he will protect the taxpayers' rights. Mr. Melo asked again if there was a legal, binding contract between the School Committee and the City Council; he believes there is and he agrees with Mr. Larisa to take this issue to the highest court just like the union would and let the

judicial system decide, as we would be setting precedent for the state. He believes that contracts can be changed; the community has many infrastructure needs.

The Council voted to move to executive session. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation – Arbitration Award – Case #113900127906, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Santos, aye.

The School Committee returned to open session. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to recess the meeting to January 24, 2007 at 5:30PM at City Hall, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Santos, aye.

Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Lovett, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee